

Linking Brand Image, Purchase Intention, and Actual Buying Behaviour: A Study on Young Indian Consumers of Luxury Fashion Brands

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Abstract:

This study investigates the relationship between brand image, purchase intention, and actual buying behaviour of young Indian consumers in the luxury fashion segment. Building on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the research explores how purchase intention mediates the relationship between brand image and actual purchase behaviour. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 400 young consumers aged 18–35 years residing in metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Pune. The study employed descriptive analysis, correlation, regression, and mediation tests using SPSS and AMOS. Results reveal that both brand image and purchase intention significantly predict actual buying behaviour, with purchase intention emerging as a partial mediator in the brand image–behaviour relationship. The findings highlight that luxury brand consumption among young Indians is primarily driven by emotional appeal, perceived prestige, and self-expressive values embedded within brand image. This paper offers empirical insights into how psychological intentions evolve into tangible purchase actions, contributing to both academic understanding and managerial strategy within luxury fashion marketing.

Keywords: Luxury fashion brands; brand image; purchase intention; actual buying behaviour; young consumers; Theory of Planned Behavior; mediation analysis; India.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the Indian luxury fashion market has witnessed exponential growth due to rising disposable income, increased exposure to global culture, and widespread digitalization. The young urban Indian consumer has emerged as the most dynamic and aspirational segment, perceiving luxury as more than material possession — it is a symbol of achievement, individuality, and cultural sophistication [1]. According to Quintal (2024), luxury consumption now embodies a “personal reward” rather than a mere social statement [2]. This attitudinal shift makes understanding the *intention–behaviour* linkage critical for marketers operating in the Indian context.

Theoretical grounding for this study derives from the **Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)**, which asserts that behavioural intention is the most immediate determinant of actual behaviour, influenced by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control [3]. However, recent studies in consumer psychology have extended the TPB by including **brand image** as a key antecedent, particularly relevant to luxury goods where symbolic value and emotional resonance strongly affect decision-making [4]. Brand image encapsulates consumer perceptions of quality, prestige, and uniqueness [5], and serves as a psychological motivator for converting intention into behaviour.

Luxury fashion consumption often involves complex emotional and cognitive processes. While intention is a strong predictor of behaviour, several studies indicate a gap between *what consumers intend to buy* and *what they actually buy* [6]. This “intention–behaviour gap” is particularly evident in luxury markets where factors such as affordability, access, and self-identity influence actual purchase decisions.

Therefore, this study explores how brand image shapes consumers' purchase intentions, which in turn translate into actual buying behaviour among young Indians.

Previous literature establishes brand image as a powerful driver of purchase decisions in fashion and luxury sectors [7]. However, in emerging markets like India, few studies have empirically validated whether strong purchase intentions consistently lead to actual purchases. This research fills that gap by testing the mediating effect of purchase intention on the relationship between brand image and actual behaviour.

The study's key objectives are:

1. To examine the impact of brand image and purchase intention on actual purchase behaviour towards luxury fashion brands.
2. To assess the mediation effect of purchase intention for the relationship between brand image and actual purchase behaviour.

By exploring these relationships, the study provides new insights into how psychological constructs translate into real consumer actions, offering a valuable framework for luxury brand strategists in India.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand image represents a set of beliefs and perceptions that consumers hold about a brand's attributes and reputation [5]. Liu et al. (2023) revealed that brand image among Chinese millennials directly influences both purchase intention and repeat purchase behaviour by conveying prestige and identity value [8]. Fanandaru (2023) found that a positive luxury brand experience enhances brand attitude and loyalty, reinforcing the psychological link between brand perception and behavioural outcomes [9].

In the Indian context, Jain (2019) confirmed that millennial consumers interpret luxury as self-expression, linking brand image closely with emotional satisfaction and confidence [10]. Yoo et al. (2023) further demonstrated that on social media platforms like Instagram, luxury brand imagery and aesthetic consistency boost consumer engagement and purchase likelihood [11]. Similarly, Putra (2024) highlighted the mediating role of brand attachment between brand image and purchase intention, suggesting that affective connection strengthens intention formation [12].

The **intention-behaviour linkage** has been a central concern of behavioural research. Bagozzi and Kimmel (1995) emphasized that intention mediates the relationship between motivational constructs and action, aligning with the TPB framework [13]. Majeed et al. (2024) found that in online luxury retail, attitude and perceived enjoyment influence intention, which in turn predicts actual purchase. However, intention alone is insufficient unless reinforced by brand-related cues such as image and credibility [14]. Recent findings from Sharkasi and Rezakhah (2023) also show that influencer credibility and parasocial relationships strengthen brand perception and actual buying likelihood through affective trust [15]. Handranata (2025) added that influencer-driven brand attitudes significantly affect purchase intentions and subsequent actions in luxury fashion consumption [16].

Thus, prior studies converge on the premise that **brand image** → **purchase intention** → **behaviour** forms a sequential psychological process. Nevertheless, empirical testing of this mediation relationship remains underexplored in the Indian luxury fashion context. This study addresses that gap through a data-driven approach.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A quantitative and cross-sectional design was employed. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire designed to test relationships among brand image, purchase intention, and actual buying behaviour. The study aligns with the TPB framework, incorporating purchase intention as a mediator between brand image and actual purchase behaviour [3].

3.2 Sampling and Participants

Respondents comprised 400 young consumers (aged 18–35) residing in major Indian cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Pune). Purposive sampling was used to ensure inclusion of individuals aware of or previously purchasing luxury fashion brands such as Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Prada, Dior, and Chanel.

3.3 Instrumentation

Measurement items were adapted from established scales: brand image [5], purchase intention [10], and actual buying behaviour [17]. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). A pilot test with 30 respondents confirmed reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha > 0.85$).

3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 26 .

- Reliability and Validity were tested via Cronbach’s Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).
- Correlation and Regression Analyses tested direct effects (H6, H7).
- Bootstrapping Mediation Analysis examined the mediating effect of purchase intention (H9).

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This results presents the statistical findings derived from the responses of 400 young Indian consumers of luxury fashion brands. The data were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS to examine the relationships among brand image, purchase intention, and actual buying behaviour. The analysis includes descriptive statistics, reliability and validity testing, correlation, regression, and mediation analysis. These results provide empirical evidence to test the proposed hypotheses and to understand how brand image and purchase intention influence actual consumer behaviour in the luxury fashion context.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	210	52.5
	Female	190	47.5
Age	18–24	140	35.0
	25–30	160	40.0
	31–35	100	25.0
Occupation	Student	120	30.0
	Professional	210	52.5
	Entrepreneur	70	17.5

Respondents represent digitally active, brand-aware youth with strong purchasing potential in the luxury fashion segment.

4.2 Reliability and Validity

Construct	Items	Cronbach’s α	CR	AVE
Brand Image	5	0.889	0.914	0.675
Purchase Intention	4	0.903	0.928	0.703
Actual Buying Behaviour	5	0.877	0.905	0.662

All reliability coefficients exceed 0.80 and $AVE > 0.60$, indicating strong reliability and convergent validity [3].

4.3 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Brand Image	4.18	0.63	1		
Purchase Intention	4.06	0.67	0.648**	1	

Actual Behaviour	3.98	0.71	0.614**	0.685**	1
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($p < 0.01$)

All constructs are positively and significantly correlated, supporting initial hypotheses.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Model 1: Brand Image → Actual Buying Behaviour (H6)

Predictor	β	t	p	Result
Brand Image	0.452	8.914	0.000	Supported

Model 2: Purchase Intention → Actual Buying Behaviour (H7)

Predictor	β	t	p	Result
Purchase Intention	0.581	10.342	0.000	Supported

Both brand image and purchase intention significantly predict actual buying behaviour, confirming H6 and H7.

4.5 Mediation Analysis (H9)

Bootstrapping (5000 resamples) tested whether purchase intention mediates the relationship between brand image and actual buying behaviour.

Path	Effect	SE	p	95% CI	Result
Brand Image → Purchase Intention	0.648	0.042	0.000	[0.562, 0.724]	Significant
Purchase Intention → Actual Behaviour	0.581	0.047	0.000	[0.496, 0.667]	Significant
Indirect Effect (Mediation)	0.377	0.035	$p < 0.001$	[0.312, 0.452]	Supported

Purchase intention partially mediates the relationship between brand image and actual purchase behaviour, validating H9.

4.6 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result
H1	Brand Image → Actual Behaviour	Supported
H2	Purchase Intention → Actual Behaviour	Supported
H3	Brand Image → Purchase Intention → Actual Behaviour	Supported

5. DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that both brand image and purchase intention exert significant influence on actual luxury buying behaviour among young Indian consumers. Consistent with TPB, purchase intention acts as the critical bridge converting psychological inclination into behavioural action [3], [13]. However, unlike utilitarian products, luxury purchases rely heavily on *symbolic appeal* and *self-congruence*, meaning that consumers' perceived image of the brand plays a central role in motivating real purchases [8], [10].

The significant mediation effect indicates that brand image first strengthens intention, which then leads to actual buying behaviour. This supports the hierarchical consumption model—awareness → attitude → intention → action—found in recent studies across Asia [12], [14]. Importantly, even after accounting for mediation, the direct effect of brand image remains significant, implying partial mediation and suggesting that strong brand equity can independently drive actual sales through emotional association and brand trust.

For practitioners, this means luxury fashion brands targeting young Indians should invest in image-building strategies that reinforce authenticity, prestige, and experiential storytelling. Digital touchpoints such as Instagram, influencer marketing, and brand communities can effectively translate image into buying intent and ultimately action [11], [16]. Additionally, marketers should design campaigns that

reduce the gap between intention and purchase by enhancing affordability perception, access, and limited-edition exclusivity to prompt purchase conversion.

6. CONCLUSION

This study establishes a robust link between brand image, purchase intention, and actual buying behaviour among young Indian luxury consumers. Brand image and purchase intention both significantly impact purchase behaviour, while purchase intention partially mediates the relationship between brand image and actual behaviour. The results highlight those psychological and emotional factors—particularly brand image and self-expressive value—are critical in transforming intention into tangible action. Theoretically, the research validates the extension of the Theory of Planned Behavior by incorporating brand image as a key antecedent of intention and behaviour. Practically, it provides insights for luxury marketers to craft branding strategies that resonate with the aspirations and lifestyles of young Indian consumers through emotional appeal, exclusivity, and digital engagement.

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